



News Release

MasterCard-U21Global Scholarship Program Back for Second Year Running to Empower Women in Travel and Tourism

20 Scholarships to be Awarded to Women Across Asia/Pacific, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and UAE

Hong Kong, 25 April 2007 – With the coming of age of Asia, Africa and the Middle Eastern markets as tourist destinations and women as an emerging economic force, MasterCard Worldwide and U21Global today announced the second year of the MasterCard-U21Global scholarship program for women in travel and tourism. The program was launched last year with the intent to empower working women professionals in the travel and tourism sector to stay ahead of industry trends and realize their full potential.

The call for entries for the online graduate program received a significant response from a wide spectrum of the industry last year, from hotels and airlines to travel and tour operators in the Asia/Pacific. With the success enjoyed by the program last year, it has now been extended to South Africa, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

The program comprises 20 scholarships for the U21Global Executive Diploma of Business Administration and is intended for graduates who want to develop skills in the management and marketing of tourism and travel. The course can articulate into the University of Nottingham MSc in Tourism and Travel Management which has been developed by Christel DeHaan Tourism and Travel Research Institute, a part of Nottingham University Business School, and U21Global, a leader in quality graduate online education for working executives and professionals.

Organizations from the travel and tourism industry across Asia/Pacific, Middle East and Africa will be invited to nominate female employees who they believe will most benefit from the learning and exposure offered by such a scholarship. MasterCard and U21Global will institute a distinguished panel of judges to choose the 20 worthy recipients.

“We are excited to extend the reach of this scholarship to South Africa, Saudi Arabia and UAE to allow more women in travel and tourism to benefit from our premium curriculum in business and to stay abreast of industry trends while also managing work commitments and family life,” said Dr Helen Lange, Dean, Business Management Programmes, U21Global. “The overwhelming response to the inaugural program in 2006 gives us reason to believe that this second year of the MasterCard-U21Global Scholarship Program will once again be a resounding success.”

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“MasterCard has been long committed to women’s advancement and with the tourism industry being one of the most dynamic economic sectors in Asia/Pacific, Middle East and Africa, we would like to encourage women in the industry to take this opportunity to upgrade their skills to stay ahead in the evolving tourism landscape.” said Georgette Tan, vice president, Communications, Asia/Pacific, Middle East & Africa, MasterCard Worldwide.

“Recent MasterCard research shows that despite positive economic growth and the tightening of labor market conditions, women still perceive themselves as not getting the same opportunities as men when it comes to managerial positions and median income. Women from the inaugural program last year have found the course extremely beneficial and we hope more women are able to meet their professional goals through this scholarship,” added Tan.

Women from the program have benefited not only from learning about the diverse aspects of tourism management and its practices but also the special online learning community that is in place, allowing the scholars to have access to a wide range of speakers and mentors, and enhance networking with each other.

“The MasterCard-U21Global Scholarship Program is a challenging but worthwhile experience and I would strongly recommend women in the travel and tourism industry to look at taking this opportunity to further their own career path and to enhance their professional skills.” said last year’s Hong Kong winner of the scholarship program, Mary Tsang, Consultant at HMC Holdings Ltd. “The course has given me a new perspective on how to deal with certain work situations and has definitely strengthened my analytical skills. The most rewarding experience is the opportunity to meet people from different countries and cultures online and being able to work while pursuing graduate study in parallel.”

According to the World Tourism Organization, world tourism broke through the barrier of 800 million international arrivals in 2005, reaching 842 million in 2006. UNWTO figures show that this increase represents over 20% growth since 2004, equivalent to 150 million additional visitors. Africa registered the strongest growth as it had also done in 2005. Asia-Pacific also posted outstanding results and the Middle East proved remarkably resilient in spite of the upheavals being experienced by the region.

Recipients of the scholarship can enjoy the benefit of studying online and can hence better manage their work and educational commitments. Those interested in more information on the scholarships and course components can log on to U21Global’s website <http://www.u21global.edu.sg/mastercard>.

About U21Global

Established in 2001, U21Global is the world's premier online Graduate School and offers globally recognised graduate programs. It is a joint venture between Universitas 21, an international network of 19 leading research-intensive universities in 11 countries, and Thomson Learning, a world leader in tailored learning solutions. U21Global combines the

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traditional quality of its founders with innovative modes of delivery on the Internet, providing students with substantial learning advantages, while balancing work, travel and family life.

U21Global has successfully enrolled students from 60 countries around the world including those from Asia, Australia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. The graduate programs draw upon the best practices in online learning and pedagogy and have been approved by U21pedagogica, an independent quality assurance body which ensures that the curriculum meets the rigorous academic standards of all 19 affiliated universities. For more information on U21Global, please visit our campus at www.u21global.edu.sg

U21Global's affiliated universities include: North America: McGill University, Tecnológico de Monterrey, University of British Columbia, University of Virginia; Europe: Lund University; University College Dublin, University of Birmingham, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Nottingham; East Asia: Fudan University, Korea University, National University of Singapore, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, University of Hong Kong; Australia & New Zealand: University of Auckland, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland.

About MasterCard Worldwide

MasterCard Worldwide advances global commerce by providing a critical economic link among financial institutions, businesses, cardholders and merchants worldwide. As a franchisor, processor and advisor, MasterCard develops and markets payment solutions, processes over 16 billion transactions each year, and provides industry-leading analysis and consulting services to financial institution customers and merchants. Through its family of brands, including MasterCard®, Maestro® and Cirrus®, MasterCard serves consumers and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. For more information go to <http://www.mastercard.com>.

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